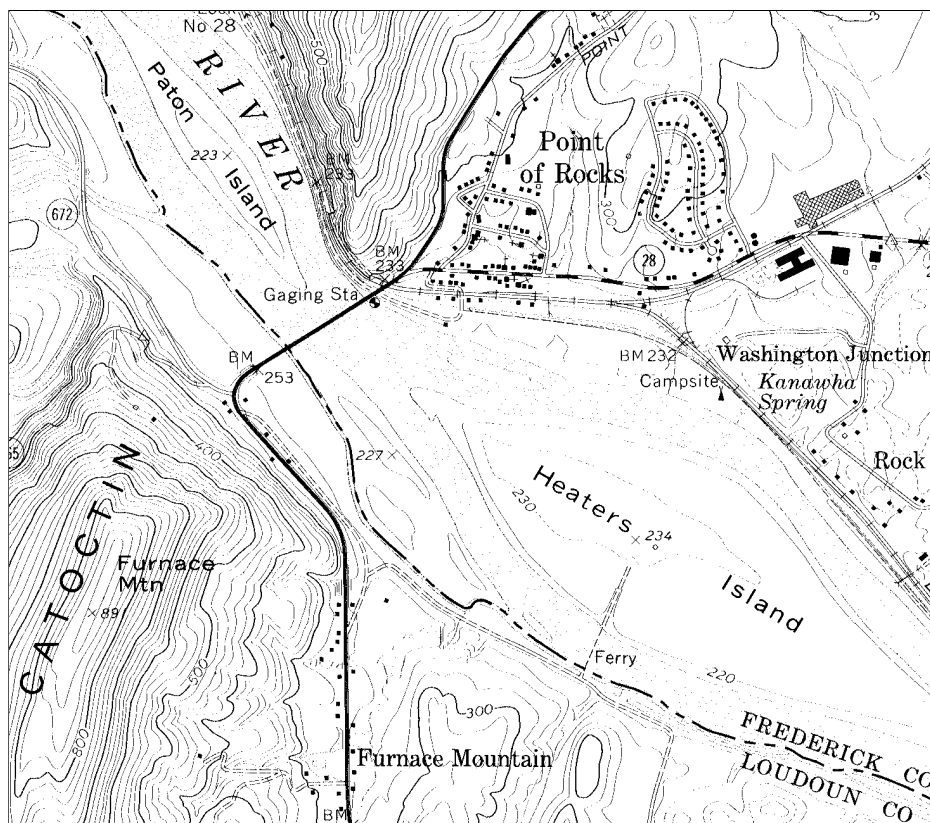


The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, contains names information for places, features, and areas in the United States that are identified by proper names. Information is available about names of features in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories and outlying areas of the United States. Data from the GNIS can be incorporated into other data bases.

The GNIS contains records on almost 2 million geographic names in the United States—from populated places, schools, reservoirs, and parks to streams, valleys, springs, ridges, and many more features. Entries include information such as the federally recognized name for the feature; former names, as well as variant spellings of the official name; the status of the names as determined by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names; the county in which each named feature is located; the geographic coordinates (in degrees, minutes, and seconds, as well as decimal degrees) that locate the approximate center of an areal feature or the mouth and source of a linear feature such as a stream; and the names of the USGS topographic maps on which the feature may appear. Elevation, extent, and historical information are available for some features. A bibliographic code referring to the source of information for feature names in the data base is also available. Data from the GNIS data base are used in emergency preparedness, mapmaking, local and regional planning, service delivery routing, marketing, site selection, environmental analysis, and genealogical research, as well as in other applications.

Data for each State or territory are compiled in two phases. The first phase, which is complete for States and areas under U.S. jurisdiction, entailed the collection of most feature names printed on the 1:24,000-scale topographic maps published by the USGS and the U.S.



Section from a 7.5-minute topographic map of Point of Rocks, Md.-Va.

Forest Service, as well as the charts of the National Ocean Service. The second phase is a long-term project to gather additional names information from other State and local materials and from a wide variety of historical documents. This project is being accomplished on a State-by-State basis.

Standard reports from the GNIS data base are available by individual State and territory. All geographic name records in the GNIS for the individual State or territory are included, and the entries are sorted alphabetically by feature name. Customers can also request specialized searches of the data base or specify custom report formats.

A report titled "Populated Places in the U.S. and Territories" lists all populated place records in the GNIS for the United States. The entries are listed alphabetically by feature name. This report

includes the official place name; the State and county in which the feature is located; the geographic coordinates in degrees, minutes, and seconds that locate the approximate center of the original place; and the 1:24,000-scale USGS topographic map on which the feature may appear. The elevation in feet is given, if available.

GNIS reports are available on paper, magnetic tape, diskette, and cartridge. Reports on paper use 132 characters per line but are currently only available as unbound, single-sheet packets. Standard digital reports are in ASCII character code and are fixed-field-length format with a record length of 240. (The Alaska digital report has a record length of 132 characters and does not include map names.)

GNIS on CD-ROM

The GNIS CD-ROM contains three GNIS data bases:

1. The National Geographic Names Data Base (NGNDB) contains almost 2 million entries for areas in and under the jurisdiction of the United States.
2. The Topographic Map Names Data Base (TMNDB) is a collection of records for quadrangle areas current and historical, which are bases for most USGS maps.
3. The Reference Data Base (RDB) is a collection of bibliographic codes and annotated bibliographies of all sources used in compiling information for the NGNDB.

Each record in the NGNDB and TMNDB can contain various location and description fields. All can be displayed, and most can be searched. Not all fields, however, contain data. The RDB contains two fields—bibliography and code.

The following fields in the NGNDB can be searched: State, feature name, feature type, county name, topographic map name, variant name, forest name, geographic coordinates, source coordinates, elevation, bibliographic reference code, and population (for incorporated entities). The fields that can be displayed only are State/county Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code, history, description, status, decision list, and record entry date.

The following fields in the TMNDB can be searched: State, topographic map name, reference coordinate, map scale, map reference code, county name, and history. One field is for display only—percent of map in county. The data contained in this field, however, have not been verified and should be used with caution.

The CD-ROM contains software for searching, sorting, displaying, printing, and exporting the data. The software must be installed onto a hard disk before the data can be used. The CD-ROM, accompanied by a users manual titled “GNIS Digital Gazetteer,” can be purchased for \$57, plus a \$3.50 handling charge per order mailed.

Each CD-ROM requires an IBM PC-XT-AT or compatible microcomputer with 512 kilobytes of memory, with DOS operating system version 3.0 or greater; one 20-megabyte hard disk drive; and a CD-ROM reader with software drivers that read ISO-9660 formatted CD-ROM's.

Information

For more information on the GNIS or on individual State and territory data base file status, contact:

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U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Phone: 703-648-4544
Fax: 703-648-4165
E-mail: gnis_manager@usgs.gov

The address for the GNIS home page is
<URL: <http://mapping.usgs.gov/www/gnis/>>

For ordering information for the GNIS CD-ROM and other GNIS products, contact any Earth Science Information Center (ESIC) or call 1-800-USA-MAPS.

For information on other USGS products and services, call 1-800-USA-MAPS, or receive information from the EARTHFAX fax-on-demand system, which is available 24 hours a day at 703-648-4888.

Please visit the USGS home page at
<URL: <http://www.usgs.gov/>>